

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-11 remain in this application. Claims 3-5, 10 & 10 had been amended by preliminary amendment dated April 13, 2001. Claims 1 and 4-8 are currently amended, and claims 12-15 have been added. Page 2, lines 20-22 provide subject matter support for new claim 12. Page 3, lines 15-18 and page 6, lines 13-16 provide subject matter support for new claim 13. Pages 5 and 6 provide support for new claims 14 and 15 (which are modeled after claim 8, but with the added pressure regulator and processor limitations).

The Examiner objected to the specification because of the lack of an abstract. Applicants have amended the specification to add a 95-word abstract.

Amendments to claims to overcome claim rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 8-11 as anticipated by Lina et al. ('EPO 0 853 950) and claims 8-10 by Hunt et al. ('WO 9718007). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-7 and 11 as unpatentable over various combinations of Lina, Hunt, and other references.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 8 to overcome these rejections. Specifically, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 8 to specifically recite a "tube connecting the canister to a wall suction point or to a vacuum bottle," rather than a "tube *for* connecting the canister to a wall suction point or to a vacuum bottle." Prior to this amendment, the Examiner argued that both Lina '950 and Hunt '007 disclosed a tube connected to a collection canister "that is capable of connecting the canister to a wall suction point or a vacuum bottle." However, neither Lina '950 or Hunt '007 actually teach or disclose any embodiment actually connecting said tube to wall suction or a vacuum bottle. Therefore neither reference anticipates the amended claims.

Applicants note, moreover, that there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation in either Lina '950 or Hunt '007 to modify the apparatuses disclosed therein to utilize wall suction or a

vacuum bottle. On the contrary, the references' use of an integrated pump motor teach away from the use of wall suction or a vacuum bottle. Moreover, in order to connect the tubes inside the Lina '950 and Hunt '007 housings to wall suction or a vacuum bottle, one would have to tear the housings apart, making the disclosed apparatuses unfit for their intended purposes.

Other claim amendments

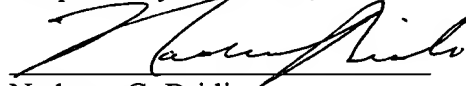
Applicants have made other minor amendments to the claims to substitute specific structural recitations for means-plus-function recitations and to clarify language that foreign patent offices have suggested was ambiguous.

Summary

Believing that it has addressed all matters raised in the Examiner's 9/10/2003 Office Action, Applicants respectfully ask that the claims, as amended, be allowed and passed to issue. If upon consideration of the above, the Examiner should feel that outstanding issues remain in the present application that could be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated to discuss resolution of such issues.

Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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